

VBSPCA

BREATHE EASY

CARING FOR FLAT-FACED DOGS

The word brachycephalic simply means “short headed”, which is a perfect description for their stout noses and flat faces. Because of their short snouts, flat-faced breeds can have a hard time breathing. They are also more susceptible to heat stroke and overheating.

- **Know Your Dog’s Limits** While many flat-faced dogs enjoy long, happy lives, there are things you can do to head off potential issues for your pet.

- **Keep your pet cool.** Warm, humid weather can make breathing especially difficult for your pet. Be sure to keep them cool, especially during the summer. If you are outside with your dog, keep them in the shade and provide plenty of water.

- **Don’t overdo it with exercise.** Regular exercise, such as going for a walk and playing, is important for any dog. However, you should always pay attention to how heavily your dog is breathing. If your pet seems to be having a hard time catching their breath, take a break in the shade.

- **Be careful around water.** Brachycephalic breeds are also not suited for swimming. Their large chests can make them more likely to tire easily and put them at an increased risk of sinking. Keep a close eye on them and consider using a dog life jacket.

- **Keep your dog at a healthy weight.** Extra pounds can make it even harder for flat-faced breeds to breathe. Monitor your dog’s weight and consult with your veterinarian about any changes you may need to make to your dog’s diet.

Common brachycephalic breeds:

- Pugs
- Bulldogs
- Boxers
- Pekingese
- Boston Terriers
- French Bulldogs
- Shih Tzus



If your pet is abnormally wheezing, coughing, or snorting, make an appointment with your veterinarian.



With careful attention and regular vet visits, both you and your pup will breathe easier knowing they are protected from potential problems.